



Washington State Department of Agriculture *Hearing Notice*

For immediate release: Jan. 20, 2004 (04-03)
Contact: Jim Quigley (360) 902-1833
John Lundberg (360) 902-2151

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

Fruit and vegetable storage hearing set for Ellensburg Jan. 27

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) wants to update and streamline state rules regarding the controlled atmosphere storage of fruits and vegetables. The department is proposing to repeal three chapters of rules and adopt a new one in its place.

A public hearing on the proposal will be held at 1 p.m. Jan. 27 in Ellensburg in the conference room of the Washington Cattleman's Association at 1301 Dolarway Rd.

Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program Manager Jim Quigley says the proposal does not introduce any new requirements. Instead, the proposal eliminates outdated information and presents existing requirements in a clearer, more readable style. A copy of the proposed chapter may be viewed on the department's Web site at www.agr.wa.gov and then clicking respectively on "Inspection Services," "F&V Program Public Hearing," and "WAC 16-450."

A "controlled atmosphere" facility is a cold storage facility where oxygen levels are controlled to prolong the life of the fruit, so the fruit can be marketed year round.

An application fee is found in the new chapter. However, Quigley points out this is not a new fee but one moved from an existing chapter. "We believe it was more appropriate to have this fee in this chapter," he said.

WSDA's Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program facilitates the movement of Washington fruits and vegetables to domestic and international markets. More than 3,000 controlled atmosphere storage facilities are licensed in the state. The facilities are monitored by WSDA for compliance with state law and rules.

Persons may submit material at the hearing orally or in writing. Written material must be received no later than 5 p.m. Jan. 27 by George Huffman, Washington State Department of Agriculture. Material may be sent by e-mail to ghuffman@agr.wa.gov; by mail at P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560; or FAX (360) 902-2085. Persons with questions on the proposal may contact Quigley by phone at (360) 902-1833 or e-mail at jquigley@agr.wa.gov; or visit the department's Web site.

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